

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus for printing out data on the basis of given information, comprising:

a memory for storing information for use in the maintenance of said image forming apparatus;

a capacity determination unit for, when a use capacity of said memory has reached a predetermined value, notifying said memory of information representing that the use capacity has reached the predetermined value and instructing said memory to output the stored information; and

a compressing unit for compressing the output information from said memory and outputting as coded information.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said compressing unit converts the output information from said memory into coded information containing a character and number or bar code type digital information, and outputs the converted information.

3. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the coded information containing a character and number is expressed by a base-10 + n (n is an integer of not less than 1) number.

4. A communication system for the maintenance of an image forming apparatus, which comprises said image forming apparatus having a printing unit for printing out data on the basis of given information, and a service provider's apparatus for receiving information for use in maintenance of said image forming apparatus, wherein

said image forming apparatus comprises:

a memory for storing information for use in the maintenance of said image forming apparatus;

a capacity determination unit for, when a use capacity of said memory has reached a predetermined value, notifying said memory of information representing that the use capacity has reached the predetermined value and instructing said memory to output the stored information; and

a compressing unit for compressing the output information from said memory and outputting as coded information, and

said service provider's apparatus comprises information storage means for sequentially receiving and storing the coded

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13. A maintenance service method of an image forming apparatus which prints out data on the basis of given information, comprising the steps of:

storing information for use in maintenance of said image forming apparatus into a memory;

causing said memory to output the stored information when a use capacity of said memory has reached a predetermined value; and

compressing the output information from said memory and outputting the compressed information as coded information.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the step of compressing the image comprises converting the output information from said memory into coded information containing a character and number or bar code type digital information.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the step of compressing the information and outputting as coded information comprises using a base-10 + n (n is an integer of not less than 1) number.

16. A method by which a service provider provides a maintenance service to a user's image forming apparatus having a printing unit for printing out data on the basis of given information, comprising the steps of:

storing information for use in maintenance of said image forming apparatus into a memory;

causing said memory to output the stored information when the use capacity of said memory has reached a predetermined value; and

compressing the output information from said memory and outputting the compressed information as coded information,

on the user side; and

sequentially storing the coded information,
on the service provider side.

17. A method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

printing the compressed coded information as image information by using said printing unit; and

reading the image information printed on the printed-out

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sheet, converting the read information into compressed character information or compressed bar code type digital information, and outputting the converted information,

on the user side; and

expanding the compressed character information or the compressed bar code type digital information; and

displaying the expanded information on a screen or printing out the expanded information,

on the service provider side.

18. A method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting the coded information to a communication line by using a first facsimile unit, which is connected to said communication line, of said image forming apparatus,

on the user side; and

receiving the coded information transmitted from said first facsimile unit by using a second facsimile unit connected to said communication line;

expanding the compressed information received by said second facsimile unit; and

displaying the expanded information on a screen or printing out the expanded information,

on the service provider side.

19. A method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting the coded information to a communication line by using a first server connected to said communication line,

on the user side; and

receiving the coded information transmitted from said first server by using a second server connected to said communication line;

expanding the compressed information received by said second server; and

displaying the expanded information on a screen or printing out the expanded information,

on the service provider side.

20. A method according to claim 16, further comprising the

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steps of:

printing the coded information and outputting a first printed-out sheet by using said printing unit;

reading and converting information on the first printed-out sheet into first information, and outputting the first information; and

changing a set value of said image forming apparatus on the basis of the first information,

on the user side; and

reading image information printed on the first printed-out sheet and converting the image information into compressed second information;

expanding the compressed second information;

displaying the expanded second information on a screen or printing out the expanded second information; and

outputting a second printed-out sheet containing information which designates a change of a set value of said image forming apparatus,

on the service provider side.

21. A method according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting the coded first information to a communication line, and receiving second information transmitted from said communication line, by using a first facsimile unit connected to said communication line; and

changing a set value of said image forming apparatus on the basis of the received second information,

on the user side; and

receiving the coded first information transmitted from said first facsimile unit, and transmitting the second information which designates a change of a set value of said image forming apparatus, by using a second facsimile unit connected to said communication line;

expanding the coded compressed first information received by said second facsimile unit; and

displaying the expanded first information on a screen or printing out the expanded first information,

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on the service provider side.

22. A system according to claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting the coded first information to a communication line, and receiving second information transmitted from said communication line, by using a first server connected to said communication line; and

changing a set value of said image forming apparatus on the basis of the received second information,

on the user side; and

receiving the coded first information transmitted from said first server, and transmitting the second information which designates a change of a set value of said image forming apparatus, by using a second server connected to said communication line;

expanding the coded compressed first information received by said second server; and

displaying the expanded first information on a screen or printing out the expanded first information,

on the service provider side.

23. A computer-readable storage medium storing information for use in maintenance of an image forming apparatus.

24. A medium according to claim 23, wherein the information contains information concerning an operation log of said image forming apparatus, information concerning the setting of said image forming apparatus, and information concerning a paper jamming occurrence portion.

25. A medium according to claim 23, wherein the information is stored as compressed coded information.